

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

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FOR DR. BOURNE WHITE HOUSE, S/NM, L, OES
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 084639

FOR AMBASSADOR AND MCLOUGHLIN FROM ARELLANO

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: SNAR, ENV, MX

SUBJECT: PARAQUAT, NARCOTICS PROGRAM, LEGAL AND ENVIRON-
MENTAL ISSUES

1. FRIDAY MORNING (31ST) ATTORNEY GENERAL OSCAR FLOREZ
TELEPHONED ME TO SAY: "YOU CAN TELL THE JUDGE THAT
GRAMOXONE (PARAQUAT) IS AN APPROVED INSECTICIDE IN MEXICO.
AS A SOVEREIGN NATION WE WILL CONTINUE TO SPRAY MARIJUANA
WITH THIS PRODUCT, SHOULD WE SO CHOOSE. SO YOU CAN SEE, IT
MAKES ABSOLUTELY NO DIFFERENCE WHAT A U.S. COURT DECIDES."

AG FLOREZ WAS REFERRING, AS YOU KNOW, TO JUDGE IN THE
D.C. CIRCUIT COURT WHICH IS HEARING THE NATIONAL ORGANI-
ZATION FOR THE REFORM OF MARIJUANA LAWS (NORML) SUIT
AGAINST THE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER USG ENTITIES.

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2. THE AG WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE EMBASSY SHOULD CONTACT
OFFICIAL MAYOR LIC. BAEZA FOR A COPY OF THE MEXICAN REGU-
LATIONS WHICH GOVERN USE OF INSECTICIDES APPROVED FOR USE--
AFTER TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS--IN
THE MEXICAN NATIONAL TERRITORY. FLOREZ AGAIN NOTED THAT
GRAMOXONE (PARAQUAT) WAS ON THE LIST OF APPROVED INSECTI-
CIDES.

3. THE AG'S CLOSING COMMENT TO ME WAS THAT HE HAD MEANT TO MAKE THE ABOVE POINTS CLEAR DURING THE PREVIOUS AFTER-NOON'S MEETING, "WHICH AMBASSADOR LUCEY SO KINDLY ATTENDED," BUT THAT "I'M AN OLD MAN, WAS TIRED AND IT SLIPPED MY MIND." HE ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS BEST REGARDS TO AMBASSADOR LUCEY AND THE U.S. TEAM, AND THEN REITERATED HIS DESIRE TO FULLY COOPERATE WITH U.S., WHERE POSSIBLE, IN THE RESOLUTION OF THE NORML COMPLAINT.

4. COMMENT: JUDGING FROM THE AG'S PERFORMANCE THE PREVIOUS DAY, I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT THE "OLD MAN" FORGOT ANYTHING. RATHER, HIS CALL TO ME PROBABLY CAME ON THE HEELS OF A MORE THOROUGH BRIEFING AS TO WHAT WENT ON AT THE THURSDAY MORNING MEETING. PARTICULARLY THE REFERENCES TO ARGUMENTS -N SOME U.S. SECTORS FOR EXTRATERRITORIAL REACH OF U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS MAY HAVE STUNG HIM. HE LIKELY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO READ THE NOTES TAKEN BY THE STENOGRAPHER AT THE MEETING, AND WAS REACTING IN A FASHION SIMILAR TO THE ORIGINAL POSITION EXPOUNDED BY BAEZA DURING THE CONFERENCE; THAT IS, MEXICO WILL NOT TOLERATE FOREIGN INTRUSION INTO ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHTS TO DECIDE WHAT ACTIONS ARE LEGAL, APPROPRIATE, OR ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND IN ITS CAMPAIGN AGAINST MARIJUANA AND OPIUM POPPIES.

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5. COMMENT: I MIGHT FURTHER ADD THAT BAEZA, IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION TOLD MS. FALCO AND MYSELF THAT WERE FUNDING TO THE NARCOTICS PROGRAM REDUCED, OR TERMINATED, BY THE U.S. IT WOULD NOT STOP THE MEXICAN ERADICATION EFFORT. HOWEVER, THE SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM WOULD CERTAINLY BE AFFECTED AND ITS PRIORITIES WOULD HAVE TO REFLECT THE MEXICAN VIEW THAT MARIJUANA POSES THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO THEIR CITIZENS. THIS WOULD VERY LIKELY MEAN A REDUCTION IN THE EFFORT DEVOTED TO OPIUM POPPY SPRAYING, GIVEN THE FACT THAT SCARCE RESOURCES WOULD PRECLUDE A CONTINUATION OF PRESENT LEVELS OF THE COMBINED POPPY-MARIJUANA ERADICATION PROGRAM; MARIJUANA SPRAYING WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PRECEDENCE. COOPER

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